Reports of regional intergovernmental bodies :

— Committee for Coordination of Joint Prospecting for Mineral Resources in Asian Offshore Areas.

— Interim Committee for Coordination of Investigations of the Lower Mekong Basin.

— Typhoon Committee.

— Asian and Pacific Development Centre.

Programme Planning :

— Programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995, as adopted by the General Assembly, and proposed programme changes.

— Second revision of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997.

— Issues relevant to and resources for the technical cooperation activities of ESCAP.

Announcement of intended contributions :

— Technical cooperation activities of ESCAP and announcement of intended contributions Activities of the Advisory Committee or Permanent Representatives and other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission.

Date, venue and any other subject pertaining to the fifty-first session of the Commission.

Impact of Budget Incentives on Tobacco Farmers

4333. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have made any assessment of the likely impact of the recent incentives given in the Budget for tobacco farmers ;

(b) whether it is a fact that the excise concessions announced in the Budget will increase tobacco production ; and

(c) steps being taken to encourage tobacco farmers to utilise the incentives given in the Budget ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) to (c) The specific rates of duties on cigarettes have remained unchanged for two years despite an increase in price, and hence the duties have increased by about 12%. However, in the non-filter segment, the excise duty for upto 60 mm category has been reduced from Rs. 120 per thousand to Rs. 60 per thousand for increased utilisation of tobacco in this industry, which would in turn help the tobacco growers. The continuation of export incentives for cigarettes and tobacco would also benefit the tobacco farmers.

Organisations for Monitoring Tobacco Cultivation

4334. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) the Organisations under Commerce Ministry which are responsible for supervising, monitoring and encouraging tobacco cultivation ; and

(b) what steps are proposed to be taken to make tobacco a leading farm export ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) The Tobacco Board is the only Organisation under the Ministry of Commerce concerned with FCV tobacco cultivation.

(b) The following steps are being taken to increase exports of Indian Tobacco :—

— sending trade delegations to various select markets.

— participation in International Exhibitions.

— Persuading Govt.'s of importing countries through joint committee meetings to import Indian Tobacco.

— Permitting export of tobacco to Russia through debt payment channel.

— Improving the quality and productivity levels of Indian Tobacco so as to make it more price competitive in international markets.